

What is claimed is:

1. In a video decoder, a system for acquiring packetized program information comprising a program conveyed on one of a plurality of broadcast channels, comprising the steps of:

identifying an individual broadcast channel of said plurality of broadcast channels in response to user entry of either of, (a) a first channel identification number and (b) a different second channel identification number;

tuning to receive said identified individual broadcast channel;

acquiring packetized program information comprising a program conveyed on said individual broadcast channel using an acquired program guide; and

processing said packetized program information to be suitable for display.

2. A system according to claim 1, wherein

said first channel identification number is a transmission channel identification number, and

said second channel identification number is a virtual channel identification number.

3. A system according to claim 2, including the step of

displaying said second channel identification number together with said program, in response to entry of said first channel identification number.

4. A system according to claim 1, wherein

said second channel identification number is comprised of two elements, a major number and a minor number.

5. A system according to claim 4, including the step of

displaying said major number and minor number together with said program, in response to entry of said first channel identification number.

6. A system according to claim 2, including the step of

displaying said first channel identification number together with said program in response to entry of said second channel identification number.

7. A system according to claim 1, wherein
said second channel identification number is comprised of two elements, a major number and a minor number, and in absence of user entry of said minor number a default minor number is used.

8. A system according to claim 1, wherein
said second channel identification number comprises a major number and a minor number, wherein
said major number is associated with both an information provider and a group of sub-channels, and
said minor number identifies a sub-channel from among said group of sub-channels.

9. A system according to claim 8, wherein
said first channel identification number is a transmission channel identification number, and
said tuning step includes tuning to receive a sub-channel comprising said identified individual broadcast channel in response to user entry of said transmission channel identification number and said minor number.

10. A system according to claim 1, wherein
in said identifying step said individual broadcast channel is identified using acquired program guide information.

11. A system according to claim 1, including the step of
searching a database to identify an individual broadcast channel of said plurality of broadcast channels in response to user entry of either of, said first channel identification number and said different second channel identification number.

12. In a video decoder, a system for acquiring packetized program information comprising a program conveyed on one of a plurality of broadcast channels, comprising the steps of:

acquiring a program guide containing information mapping a first broadcast channel number to a different second channel number, said acquired program guide being one of a plurality of different available program guides including a program guide omitting said mapping information;

tuning to receive said second channel in response to user entry of said first broadcast channel number using said acquired program guide;

acquiring packetized program information comprising a program conveyed on said second channel.

13. A system according to claim 12, wherein
said first broadcast channel number is a virtual channel identification number, and

said second channel identification number is a transmission channel identification number.

14. A system according to claim 12, wherein
said first broadcast channel number is comprised of two elements, a major number and a minor number.

15. A system according to claim 12, wherein
said first broadcast channel number is comprised of two elements, a major number and a minor number, and in absence of user entry of said minor number, a default minor number is used.

16. A system according to claim 14, wherein
said major number is associated with a broadcast information provider.

17. A system according to claim 12, including the step of
selecting said program guide containing mapping information from said plurality of different available program guides including said program guide omitting said mapping information.

18. A system according to claim 12, including the step of displaying at least one of, (a) said first broadcast channel number, and (b) said second channel number, together with said program, in response to user entry of said first broadcast channel number.

19. A system according to claim 18, wherein said first broadcast channel number comprises a major number and a minor number, wherein said major number is associated with both an information provider and a group of sub-channels, and said minor number identifies a sub-channel from among said group of sub-channels.

20. A system according to claim 12, wherein said first broadcast channel number comprises a major number and a minor number, wherein said major number is associated with both an information provider and a group of sub-channels, and said minor number identifies a sub-channel from among said group of sub-channels, and said second channel number is a transmission channel identification number, and said tuning step includes tuning to receive a sub-channel comprising said second channel in response to user entry of said transmission channel identification number and said minor number.

21. In a video decoder, a system for acquiring packetized program information comprising a program conveyed on one of a plurality of broadcast channels, comprising the steps of:

receiving at least one of, (a) a virtual channel identification number and (b) a transmission channel identification number, said transmission channel conveying packetized program information comprising a program;

mapping said virtual channel number to said transmission channel identification number;

tuning to receive said transmission channel using said transmission channel identification number in response to user entry of either one of, said virtual channel identification number, and said transmission channel identification number; and

acquiring said packetized program information comprising said program conveyed on said transmission channel.

22. A system according to claim 21, including the step of displaying at least one of, (a) said virtual channel identification number, and (b) said transmission channel identification number, together with said program, in response to user entry of said first broadcast channel number.

23. A system according to claim 22, wherein said virtual channel identification number comprises a major number and a minor number, wherein

said major number is associated with an information provider and a group of sub-channels, and

said minor number identifies a sub-channel from among said group of sub-channels.

24. In a video decoder, a system for tuning to acquire packetized program information comprising a program conveyed on one of a plurality of broadcast channels identified by a virtual channel identification number including a major number associated with an information provider and a group of sub-channels and a minor number identifying a sub-channel from among said group of sub-channels, comprising the steps of:

navigating within a first list, including a plurality of broadcast channels, to identify and select a broadcast channel and an associated virtual channel identification number, in response to user activation of a first navigation control;

navigating within a second list of a group of sub-channels associated with said selected broadcast channel to identify and select a sub-channel and an associated minor number, in response to user activation of a second navigation control;

tuning to receive a selected broadcast channel using said selected virtual channel identification number; and

acquiring packetized program information comprising a program conveyed on said broadcast sub-channel using said minor number.

25. A system according to claim 24, wherein

said first navigation control comprises a control for incrementally or decrementally traversing through numbered broadcast channels, and

said second navigation control comprises a control for incrementally or decrementally traversing through numbered sub-channels.

26. A system according to claim 24, wherein

said first and second navigation controls use the same user activated remote control unit button.

27. A system according to claim 24, wherein

said first and second navigation controls use different user activated remote control unit buttons.

28. A system according to claim 24, wherein
said first navigation control comprises a control for incrementally or
decrementally traversing through a displayed menu listing numbered broadcast
channels, and

said second navigation control comprises a control for incrementally
or decrementally traversing through a displayed menu listing numbered sub-channels.

29. A system according to claim 24, including the steps of
generating a displayed menu listing numbered broadcast channels
incrementally or decrementally traversed in response to said first navigation control,
and

generating a displayed menu listing numbered sub-channels
incrementally or decrementally traversed in response to said second navigation
control.